Little Brighteyes

By LOUISE NURRIFIELD.

That was what Davis had nicknamed her at the first rehearsal of "Flimflam." She was the scrawniest, homeliest girl in the chorus when the girls lined up for first inspection and happened to land in the middle at the line-up. Davis spotted her and called out before everybody in the pleasant, merry little way he had:

"That will do for yours, Little Brighteyes. Never mind about taking the center. We'll save the spot light when you're around. The back row for yours."

Everybody turned to take a good look at Little Brighteyes before the back row swallowed her forever. She was about thirty, a slim little woman with big gray eyes and dark hair. It was a point of beauty in its own way, that hair, soft and brown and straight as Minnehaha's ever was, but she had tried to marcel it into shape with a home applied curling iron to make her look professional, and it was a sight. But she took her medicine bravely, and even Davis recognized the grit in her.

It was her best asset in the after days, that grit. It carried her through all of Davis' major and minor tantrums and the teasing from the other girls. She said little and worked hard, but the nickname that Davis had given her that first day stuck fast. Even Jennie Reynolds, the wardrobe woman, caught it, and when she was handing out the costumes to the girls she tossed a bunch across the room and called out cheerfully:

"Here you go, Brighteyes!"

And Little Brighteyes just laughed good naturedly, although she had drawn the least artistic clothes in the lot. It didn't matter when one was only the fourth girl in the last row back. She did as Davis had told her and kept out of the spot light.

"That girl's an old timer," Davis remarked to Vida Lorne as the two stood in the first entrance the opening night and watched the girls take a big encore on the "Rattlebang" song. There were sixteen picked out from the little ones in the crowd, and Brighteyes was one of them. It was a jolly, swinging, drummer boy chorus and took the minute it hit the house. The girls were all in scarlet and black, with snare drums, and Little Brighteyes was beating hers for sure, no make believe. The rouge helped her lots, and so did the red and black costume. Her head was held high, just a bit atilt, and her lips were parted in a smile.

Marshall—Nick Marshall that was—the manager, was beside Vida. He watched the skinny little figure on the end thoughtfully as the girls went off.

"She's all right," he said. "Put her on to lead tomorrow night in that chorus, Davis, and see how she goes. She's on to the ropes all right."

Vida leaned forward to get a better look.

"I've seen that girl somewhere, Nick," she said. "Look at her now with that drum. And the way she steps! Who is she?"

"Little Brighteyes," laughed Davis shortly. "That's all she is now anyway, but she's an old timer all right."

Vida laughed, too, as Marshall walked around with her to the big white automobile in which she made her first entrance. The first act showed a mountain scene in a country anywhere between Italy and China. The beautiful American heiress was doing the touring stunt all over Europe, and the prince of the country was in love with her. He had followed the lead of the white automobile all over the map and finally had induced the girl to pay a visit to his own land. She feared possible banditti. He assured her the red and black drummer boys and the army behind them could protect her. And all the time, of course, he merely wanted to get her over the border, abduct her, shut her up in the castled steep fortress (act 2) and starve her into marrying him and filling his stingy little treasury with oodles of American coin. It was a rehash, but it went with a bang. Even before Vida's entrance the thing was a sure success, and Marshall was solidly joyous.

"Be careful and don't lose your head when you take that run," he said as he stood beside the auto while Vida was helped in. It was a good trick, that first entrance of the American girl. They had a mechanical arrangement for the auto to scorch down the mountain pass, and it looked as though it was going straight over the footlights. There were four turns to the run, and then it brought up short right in the center of the stage in a self locking frog and made a mighty effective picture.

"There isn't a bit of danger," answered Vida, drawing on her white gauntlets. "I'm just as cool as can be. Not a bit rattled, thank you. Let her go."

There was the second's pause in the orchestra, then the crash of entrance music, and they released the machine. It took the incline like a boy's coaster—smooth and swift and easy. Davis was white, but Marshall stroked his vandyke and frowned ever so slightly as he watched the car and its occupant. It was a dangerous trick, but it brought down the house.

Marshall stared at Vida. Under the rouge her face was dead white, and he knew she was scared. When she came off the stage she sent for him.

"Nick, I won't go through that again, not if the whole show goes to pieces. I simply can't. It is terrible. Why, it would be like dying every night! I won't ride in that thing again."

Davis suggested a dummy, but Marshall wouldn't stand for any fake. The girl in the machine must be alive, and suddenly Davis suggested Little Brighteyes.

"She's got the same air and build as Miss Lorne, and you can hide the face with a veil. Change the scene so as to carry off the auto long enough for the two to change places after the run, and there you are. And she's the only girl I know who has the grit to do it."

She had the grit. It meant a doubling of her salary, and she made the run night after night, with never a tremor of fear. No one knew the difference. The two women were the same size and the same carriage, and Vida was delighted.

"It's lots of fun," she told Marshall. "It's like hiring some one to die for you, don't you know."

The laughing words flashed across Marshall one night when "Flimflam" was on its third month. He happened to be standing at the foot of the stairs leading up to the platform where the machine stood. As she came by to take her place in it Little Brighteyes had to pass him, and for the first time their eyes met. Marshall never moved when she had gone up the stairs. He had forgotten "Flimflam" and New York. Somewhere, some time, so long ago that he didn't like to remember it or have other people either, one Nick Marshall had run a little one ring circus through the country towns—about thirteen years back—and there had been a girl, a pretty, piquant girl, who rode a horse in the parade and drove a chariot in the funny, shabby little grand entry, and after a couple of years of the one ring circus Nick Marshall had decided his talent lay in New York and had left the circus and the little country towns and other handicaps behind him.

The burst of applause from the front of the house recalled him. The machine was released, and the American heiress incog. was doing her nightly "stunt." And suddenly there was a dull, strange crash, and the music stopped. Marshall spoke over his shoulder as he made for the stage, and they rang down the curtain and started up the music again, for the public must not see unpleasant things when it takes its gayety, and there was a most unpleasant thing lying under the automobile that had turned turtle.

"She isn't dead," said Davis as he and Vida bent over the slim figure in the white suede cloak. "Get her to the hospital and she will pull through. It's only the shoulder smashed."

Marshall pushed the two to one side and lifted the figure in his arms. As he did so Little Brighteyes opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

"Hello, boy," she said faintly. Marshall bent his head and kissed her before the whole crowd.

"Never mind the hospital, Davis," he said quietly. "I'll take Mrs. Marshall home myself."

And the rest watched him as he strode across the stage with his burden out to where a carriage waited at the side door to the theater. Then Vida looked up at Davis and laughed as the stage was cleared for the curtain raising.

"I've known it for weeks," she said. "I tried and tried to think where I had seen her before, and then all at once it came to me. Nick married her back in the circus days and then left her out west in some dead and alive hole, while he came on to New York to try to make good. He made good, but forgot all about any responsibility out west, and she was too proud to hunt him up when she thought he didn't want her. I saw her in comic opera out in Frisco eight or nine years ago. She made a big success in 'Fatinitza.' I remembered her all at once watching her play that drum. But it was her own affair, and I didn't tell. Nick played fair at the climax, didn't he?"

Davis nodded. But as he watched the laughing, pretty face beside him, white to the lips, as when she had taken that first ride down the run, he knew that one other besides Nick had played fair, too—fair to Little Brighteyes.

Whitman's Poetry.

Walt Whitman's poetry, in spite of the long, joggled, lumbering places in it, comes nearer to reaching out to what the modern age is trying to be than any other that we have. Whitman may or may not be considered a poet, but he has outswept the bounds of beauty for human life. He has seen the whole universe in every clod of it. He has God's definition of beauty. Naturally he does not express it as well as God does. His symbolism is crowded with hapless places, and God's symbolism never misses the point, but as the ground plan for a great modern poet—an original or working poet in a new built, new building, working world—Walt Whitman is the first and only figure large enough that the world has had. He had a larger repertory of joys—joys with everyday things that any man might have—than any other poet. His autobiography would take in a larger section of the universe.—Putnam's.

Sleep and Old Age.

There is no question that the quantity of sleep required steadily diminishes from infancy to old age. This is a rather interesting exception to the general rule that, as in many matters, old age returns to the needs of infancy. As regards sleep, old age is more remote in its needs from infancy than is any other period of life. If elderly people obtain good sleep during the first few hours and if they have not lost that delight in reading which we all had in youth, but which so many of us curiously lose, their case is not to be grieved over. The special value of the earliest hours of sleep, by the way, has been proved by psychological experiment. The popular phrase "beauty sleep" is well warranted. It is the early, the deepest, hours of sleep that make for health and beauty.—Pall Mall Gazette.

A Hypothetical Question.

"Miss de Smythe," began the young man, "I want to ask you a hypothetical question."

The girl nodded assent.

"If a young man of good family and sound health and an assured income of $5,000 were to meet the most charming of girls and feed her ice cream for a year; if she had a complexion like a rose, hair a crown of golden glory, the hand of a fairy, the bearing of a queen; if she knew how not to play the piano, was versed in cooking, competent to superintend a home, and if the young man, auspiciously catching the young girl alone, were to murmur into her ear of pearl, 'Will you marry me?' what, in your estimation, would be her condition of mind and what her answer?"

"While not an expert alienist," responded the girl coyly, "I think she'd believe him a chump for being so slow, but she'd say 'Yes.'"

With the preliminaries thus settled, the naming of the day was a simple matter.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Bees Faster Than Pigeons.

It is not generally known that bees are swifter in flight than pigeons—that is, for short distances. Some years ago a pigeon fancier of Hamme, Westphalia, laid a wager that a dozen bees liberated three miles from their hive would reach home in less time than a dozen pigeons. The competitors were given wing at Rybern, a village nearly a league from Hamme, and the first bee reached the hive a quarter of a minute in advance of the first pigeon. Three other bees reached the goal before the second pigeon. The bees were also slightly handicapped, having been rolled in flour before starting for purpose of identification.

Style In Writing.

We cannot all be Macaulays, but we can greatly improve our style by closely observing his and that of equally notable writers, by being careful to avoid using "flowery"—which are invariably weak—sentences and by not imitating the great Dr. Johnson, who, content to use Saxon words at once pure and forcible in conversation, generally resorted, with a pen in his hand, to those long Latin forms which his soul loved.—O. C. Williams in London Captain.

A Pair of Them.

Mrs. Tucker—Tommy, I wish you wouldn't play with that Flango boy any more.

Tommy—Gee! I'm only playin' with him because his mamma told him that if he had anything more to do with that Tucker boy she'd spank him.—Chicago Tribune.

A Chatty Old Lady.

The following advertisement appears in a fashionable English newspaper: "Lonely lady wishes to exchange scandal with another. Replies required only from those in the best 'society.'"

Men of understanding are instructed by reason, the ignorant by necessity and beasts by nature.—Cicero.

COFFIN FOR TWO

Made For Aged Couple, Who Are Praying For Death.

Bluffton, O.—Mr. and Mrs. John Fenton, of this place, are both calmly awaiting death, and hope the Almighty will see fit to carry them off at the same time, so that their wish for a double funeral will be realized. Mr. Fenton is 83 years old, while his wife is six years his junior. They have been sick for some time, and have made all preparations for death.

A double casket has been built and practically all arrangements made for the funeral.

Years ago, because of the love they entertained for one another, the idea that they could both die at the same time became firmly impressed upon them. They have lived in this section all their lives, and are highly respected citizens.

AVALANCHE OF CORN

Fell When Floor Collapsed and One Life Was Snuffed Out.

Urbana, O.—Patrick Landers, aged 50, married, was caught beneath an avalanche of falling corn at the livery stable of Pence & McConnell and his life was snuffed out instantly.

Heavy cross-beams which stood the weight of the corn and oats for years suddenly gave way, allowing the floor to fall with a crash. Landers was directly in the path of the falling floor, and just as he looked up to see what the noise was about he was pinned to the floor. His skull was crushed when recovered.

There were about 500 bushels of corn in the crib.

Digs Up Mother's Grave.

Bowling Green, O.—Calling loudly to her dead mother and digging in frenzied strength at the grave in a lonely cemetery at the midnight hour, Mrs. Greenfield was found by friends. Her mother, Mrs. J. P. Oates, had been in an asylum for a year, but a short time before her death was taken home very much improved in health. She became suddenly worse, however, and died. The daughter was very deeply affected by her mother's death, and in her grief could find no consolation.

Suit Recalled By Marriage.

Cleveland, O.—Miss Hazel Lawrence, the beautiful young daughter of Mrs. Clara Lawrence, was secretly married to George Franklin Tuttle. The bride is a niece of M. L. Lawrence, the millionaire publisher of the Ohio Farmer. She sued her uncle some months ago for heavy damages, and Lawrence was indicted on a serious charge, but both cases were dismissed later.

Says Longworth Is An Interloper.

Columbus, O.—James Frieze, who is confined in the sanitarium here, applied to court for his release on the ground that his mind is all right. He declares that he is the rightful husband of Alice Roosevelt Longworth, and that Nicholas Longworth is an interloper and ought to be shot.

No Wonder the Son Was Surprised.

A melodrama was some years since played in a certain theater, the chief actor in which had made himself, from his overbearing conduct, disliked by one and all. In the last scene he was supposed to visit the tombs of his ancestors. In the center of the stage, upon a marble pedestal, stood the statue of his father. A heavy fold of drapery covered the figure.

Enter Albert. "Once again," he says, "let me gaze upon those features which in life so often beamed with tenderest affection. Father, thy mourning son now comes to pay thee reverence. Let me remove the veil which from vulgar gaze shields the image of a once dear parent."

The drapery fell aside, and, behold, the father stood upon his head! The effect cannot be described. It was electric. The shouts of laughter which followed effectively put an end to the scene, which changed to the next as quickly as possible amid the bravos of the audience, the anger of the manager and the uncontrollable rage of the actor.—London Tit-Bits.

A Painter's Odd Ways.

Alfred Hunt was at the same time both a very slow and a fastidiously punctilious sketcher from nature, a combination which is said to have hastened his end, for he had a block for every hour of the day and every condition of weather, and, overladen with these, he would often trudge a lengthy distance to his work. He would then start, say, on an incomplete morning effect in sunshine, to be cast aside for a similar subject in shadow if the scene clouded over or for a noonday one directly that hour was reached. It is said that he consequently sometimes carried as many as a dozen varieties of the same view.—St. James' Gazette.

Valuable Conch Shell.

There are evidently a number of mysterious properties about the conch shell in its relation to Indian religious rites and ceremonies that require investigation. For instance, a conch with its spirals twisting to the right instead of to the left is supposed to be worth its weight in gold. Some years ago a conch of that description was offered for sale in Calcutta with a reserve price of a lac of rupees placed on it. It was eventually bought in for £4,000.—Allahabad Pioneer.

Her Self Control.

"There's one thing I will say," remarked Mr. Millions, "and that is that my daughter, Arabella, has a fine disposition."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir. The way she can listen for hours to her own playing on the violin shows remarkable self control."

Accounted For.

"The baby's awful bald," said Mabel.

"Yes; they come bald on purpose. If they had hair they'd pull it all out, and then all that hair would be wasted," said Tommy.—Philadelphia Record.

The inventor of eau de cologne was an Italian, Giovanni Farini. He offered vainly to sell it for $3750 in 1793, but a few years ago it was sold by his heirs for $200,000.

CAN'T OUST DIRECTORS.

Governor Powerless to Act In Butler County Infirmary Case.

Columbus, O. — Attorney General Wade H. Ellis, in an opinion rendered to Gov. Harris, declares that the governor has no power to proceed in investigations of county infirmaries.

Nor has the governor power to act after disclosures of graft or misfeasance in office of infirmary directors are made.

The disclosures in the Butler county infirmary muddle, and the pressure from certain newspapers for the ousting of the officials of the infirmary, led to pressure being brought on the governor urging that he bring such action as would oust the officials.

The attorney general in his opinion says that it is the duty of the prosecuting attorney to bring any action demanded by public policy, and that if he refuses, then the auditor of the state should bring the matter to the attention of the attorney general, who will act.

Board of Charities "Busted."

Youngstown, O.—Gov. Harris has announced that the opinion of Attorney General Wade Ellis is against the investigation of the affairs at the Canfield infirmary. One of the reasons given is that the board of charities is practically bankrupt.

Nailed Herself In.

Manchester, O.—Entering her bedroom, Mrs. John Brown nailed fast the windows and door, and then shot herself in the head, dying instantly. Illhealth is blamed.

On Firebug's Evidence.

Bryan, O.—Upon evidence of Jack Page, confessed firebug, the grand jury returned seven indictments. The names of the accused are withheld.

Student Vote Challenged.

Athens, O.—The lid was clamped down when the "drys" registered a majority of 13. Fifteen hundred and forty votes were cast. Ten saloons are put out of business. The voting of Ohio university students caused much controversy. Many were challenged.

Will Be Mustered Out.

Columbus, O.—Adjt. Gen. Critchfield, by command of Gov. Harris, ordered that Co. E, Seventh regiment, Summerfield, and Co. C, Seventh regiment, Gallipolis, be mustered out of the service. The charge is inefficiency.

Particular About It.

Columbus, O.—H. K. Dyxon, an employe of the Standard Oil Co., borrowed a razor from a fellow boarder and a few minutes later cut his own throat. Carefully wiping the tool he then laid it upon a shelf. He died soon afterward.

"What did you have for lunch?"

"I had some nearcoffee, some almosteggs, a little baconine and a wedge of not-quite pie."—Washington Herald.

The largest estate in the United Kingdom is the lordship of Sutherland, the property of the Duke of Sutherland. The estate is no less than 739,200 acres.